

What is claimed is:

CLAIM 1. An earplug comprising:

a foam body; and

a detectable insert encapsulated within said foam body.

CLAIM 2. The earplug of claim 1 wherein:

said foam body is made from a slow recovery foam.

CLAIM 3. The earplug of claim 1 wherein:

said detectable insert includes metal.

CLAIM 4. The earplug of claim 1 wherein:

said detectable insert includes a magnetic material.

CLAIM 5. The earplug of claim 1 wherein:

said detectable insert includes an x-ray detectable material.

CLAIM 6. The earplug of claim 1 wherein:

substantially an entire surface of said insert is in contact with said foam body.

CLAIM 7. A method of manufacturing an earplug comprising:

- obtaining an earplug having a foam body;
- forming a channel in said foam body;
- placing a detectable insert in said channel; and
- allowing said foam body to encapsulate said insert.

CLAIM 8. The method of claim 7 wherein:

- said foam body is made from a slow recovery foam.

CLAIM 9. The method of claim 7 wherein:

- said detectable insert includes metal.

CLAIM 10. The method of claim 7 wherein:

- said detectable insert includes a magnetic material.

CLAIM 11. The method of claim 7 wherein:

- said detectable insert includes an x-ray detectable material.

CLAIM 12. The method of claim 7 wherein:

- substantially an entire surface of said insert is in contact with said foam body.

CLAIM 13. The method of claim 7 wherein:

said channel is formed by inserting a punch in said foam body.

CLAIM 14. The method of claim 7 wherein:

said foam body is chilled.

CLAIM 15. The method of claim 13 wherein:

said channel is formed by a punch and said punch is chilled.

CLAIM 16. A method of manufacturing an earplug comprising:

obtaining an earplug having a foam body;

projecting a detectable insert into said foam body at a predetermined trajectory and speed; and

allowing said foam body to encapsulate said insert.

CLAIM 17. The method of claim 16 wherein:

said foam body is made from a slow recovery foam.

CLAIM 18. The method of claim 16 wherein:

said detectable insert includes metal.

CLAIM 19. The method of claim 16 wherein:

said detectable insert includes a magnetic material.

CLAIM 20. The method of claim 16 wherein:

said detectable insert includes an x-ray detectable material.

CLAIM 21. The method of claim 16 wherein:

substantially an entire surface of said insert is in contact with said foam body.